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SUBJECT: SUDAN PRESIDENT BASHIR STRIKES A STRANGELY POSITIVE NOTE IN ADDRESS TO THE NATION

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Speaking on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the National Salvation Revolution, Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir spoke to the nation from Omdurman July 6. In what was widely seen as a inaugural campaign speech for the elections scheduled next year under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Bashir maintained a highly positive tone, enumerating the economic and security achievements of his regime. For the future, he promised to continue to implement the CPA, to seek peaceful resolution of conflict in "our beloved Darfur," and to work with all other political parties for national conciliation. END SUMMARY

RUNNING ON HIS RECORD: ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

¶2. (U) Reeling off what he said were the achievements of the National Salvation Revolution, Bashir addressed mostly economics and development. In the realm of national security, he said the Revolution had completed the process of securing national independence and sovereignty by rejecting interference by "hegemonic states."

¶3. Among the achievements Bashir claimed: development of the oil industry; expanding production of electricity and infrastructure, including the Merawi Dam; spurring the national economy to the point that it is now one of the largest recipients of investments, both from the Arab world and the world at large; laying the basis for a strong agricultural industry to close the food gap that is presently stalking the world. In addition, the government has helped the country join the communications revolution, to the point, Bashir said, where Sudan leads the region. It is developing the construction industry that will provide adequate housing for all citizens, with special emphasis on the needs of the poor.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES: MORE SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

¶4. (U) Among the objectives that Bashir listed for the future are:

- 1) Continued commitment to the principles of a modern state based on science, faith, respect for human rights, rule of law, and respect for the peaceful transition of power;
- 2) Conducting free, fair and monitored elections as stipulated by the CPA and the interim national constitution;
- 3) Settlement of internal conflicts throughout the country, particularly in "our beloved Darfur," through peaceful dialogue; ending the suffering of the country's IDPs;
- 4) Work to implements peace accords signed in Nivasha, Abuja, Cairo and Asmara;
- 5) Speed up implementation of comprehensive health insurance, again with special attention to the poor.

GOOD NEIGHBORS - OTHER PARTIES, OTHER COUNTRIES

5) (U) Bashir pledged that Sudan would continue its good-neighbor policies of non-intervention, and would urge "some neighboring countries" (they know who they are) to respect those principles. The Government would continue to safeguard national security and sovereignty, and would not accept any infringements. Finally, the

President saluted all of Sudan's political parties, and said he hoped to meet with all of them to work towards national conciliation.

6) (SBU) COMMENT: A far cry from his usual threatening "jihad" speeches, this was surely the most uniformly positive speech by Bashir that we can recall, and clearly seemed framed as an election campaign speech (in fact his advisors had told us that it would be a campaign speech). Moreover, with the possibility of an ICC indictment looming, we suspect President Bashir may also hope to tantalize the international community with signs of what is possible.

FERNANDEZ